EXECCONNECT



SCOTT MCCORKLE

Focused on Indiana's Future

By Anthony Schoettle

For more than three decades, Scott McCorkle has been at the center of Indiana's technology and entrepreneurial growth. A veteran executive, entrepreneur, investor and community leader, he is perhaps best known for helping build Indianapolis-based ExactTarget into one of the state's most celebrated technology success stories before its $2.5 billion acquisition by Salesforce in 2013.

Along the way, the native Hoosier has held leadership roles with Software Artistry, Salesforce Marketing Cloud, High Alpha and several startup ventures that have helped shape Indiana's innovation ecosystem.

Today, McCorkle, 60, serves as CEO of Metaimpact, a software company focused on improving alignment and transparency between buyers and sellers. He also remains deeply involved in civic and business initiatives, championing efforts to strengthen Indiana's economy, workforce and technology sector. He has been recognized as an Indiana Chamber Dynamic Leader of the Year and a TechPoint Trailblazer, honors that reflect his business accomplishments and commitment to advancing opportunities across the state.

McCorkle – who grew up in Milroy and graduated from Rushville Consolidated High School and Ball State University – and his wife, Tiffany, have five children and three grandchildren. When he's not at work or volunteering his time, you often can find him relaxing at his Fishers home and tending to his gardens.

Now, McCorkle is preparing – in November – to take on another influential leadership role as chairman of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce board. He has served on the organization's governing body for more than a decade. As Indiana businesses navigate issues ranging from workforce shortages and artificial intelligence to economic competitiveness and entrepreneurship, his experience leading high-growth companies and mentoring emerging ventures provides a unique perspective on the opportunities and challenges ahead.

BizVoice®: What does being selected chairman of the Indiana Chamber mean to you personally and professionally at this stage of your career?

Scott McCorkle: "It's a chance to serve the Chamber in an even more direct way. I think the Chamber is an important institution for the state and being on the board and executive committee to help shape policy has been a real delight. And now to represent the Chamber as chairman and help advance policies to make Indiana better is a real honor."

BV: As chairman, what do you see as the Chamber's top three priorities over the next year, and why?

SM: "Let me emphasize one priority because I think it has come to the forefront in a dramatic way and that is growth. To advocate why growth is important, to encourage policies to support economic growth, population growth, innovation and innovation mindsets. We see growth being attacked on both the political right and the political left in ways we've not seen before. And the Chamber has an important role to ensure that the state understands why growth is important."

BV: Indiana faces ongoing challenges in workforce development, population growth and talent attraction. Where should

business leaders focus their efforts first?

SM: "We actually enjoy some notable population growth when measured against our Midwest neighbors, which is exciting. There's a very positive climate for business and opportunities that are drawing people to the state. I think from a quality of place perspective, Indiana needs to be somewhere that people want to live where they can raise their families in affordable ways. If you have workers in a labor pool that has the talent organizations are looking for, they will come."

BV: How do you envision working with Chamber President and CEO Vanessa Green Sinders and the board to advance Indiana's competitiveness?

SM: "This has been such a strong asset of the Chamber for as long as I've been associated with it – a very talented team of professionals and lobbyists and policymakers that are just exceptional at what they do. What they would like from the board and the chair and vice chair and past chair is that perspective and to be challenged to do even more and to have a sounding board."

BV: You spent your career building technology companies while remaining deeply committed to Indiana. What advantages does Indiana offer businesses today?

SM: "In my industry, the quality of place is essential because my employees can be anywhere they want to be. Now, if you're a physical manufacturing plant or other kinds of businesses, that isn't the case. The physical location is incredibly important, but for a huge swath of jobs in the knowledge sector, you have to be a place people want to live. And I encourage the kinds of investments you see the state and our communities making that really focus on quality of place. I think that's essential."

BV: And where is Indiana falling short?

SM: "We need to make sure we focus on the things that are important for growth. And there are a number of cultural issues and the culture wars that are not helpful for growth. So let's, as a state and leadership, focus on the things that matter. We need businesses to locate in Indiana. We need those businesses to be successful. We need an environment that encourages and celebrates innovation. So, let's focus on growth."

BV: Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping nearly every industry. What opportunities and risks should Indiana employers be paying closest attention to over the next five years?



Scott McCorkle, far right, has been a leading voice in the state's tech sector and an advocate for broader economic development. McCorkle is the new chairman of the Indiana Chamber. *Photo courtesy of IBJ Photo/Chad Williams*

SM: "We see organizations like (CEOs of Indiana Corporate Partnership) pressing in to advance how businesses are thinking about AI and other programs across the state, which are really thoughtful and important and to show examples and help organizations see what the opportunities are. The vast majority of businesses have not applied AI in a way to really increase the efficiencies of their operations, and we need to help lead the way. And that AI can and will increase the effectiveness of businesses, I think, ultimately creates more jobs. It's well documented from several (sources) that jobs could change, but I do think that AI will be a net positive to economic growth."

BV: MetaCX, which morphed into Metaimpact, represents a different approach to buyer-seller relationships and company building. What did that experience teach you about innovation, risk and resilience that you'll bring to the Chamber leadership role?

SM: "Through this idea of invention and stepping into something you believe should exist that doesn't, and to create it, is very difficult. There are degrees of that which speak to more foundational innovation at a category level. It's not just trying to fix something incrementally, but trying to foundationally innovate in a new way that comes with a whole risk profile that can be more risk, but the rewards and the benefits can be much greater.

"I think Indiana as a state can aim big, think big. What is it that we can do at a grander scale that by definition is harder, but the benefits would be much greater? And we have wonderful examples of that. Of course, Eli Lilly is probably the quintessential example of that. The innovation is contagious. Innovation likes innovation. So, to then have companies that want to cluster around these success stories, let's just emphasize and celebrate and from a policy perspective, recognize those strengths. But I would say that this is leadership. We need leaders that challenge us to think big and set big goals and step in to achieve those goals."

BV: What policy changes would most improve Indiana's ability to attract entrepreneurs, investment and high-growth companies?

SM: "I wish I had a single answer for that. I think it is a collection of policy (initiatives). I'll call it ecosystem dynamics where you have innovative companies doing innovative things that create a cluster of talent that other companies want to tap into. There's not just one company and a group of people serving that company's needs. These things happen in clusters. And that kind of innovation likes to be around other innovations. Fishers has done this with life sciences. That's a great example of really focusing on a collection of companies that exist in an ecosystem, not just thinking about individual one-off ideas, but how do the ideas compound one another and kind of create a self-referencing or self-cycle of activity. Life sciences is a great strength to build on. We mentioned technology earlier, and we've had successful technology companies here and a successful technology company can be built anywhere. We need to create policies that foster this kind of growth."

RESOURCE: Scott McCorkle, Metaimpact, at www.metaimpact.com